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AUTHOR Young, Richard; Lee, Sue
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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to show that an effective and innovative English as a foreign language (EFL) curriculum is contingent upon the behavior and attitudes of the classroom teachers who carry out that curriculum. A greater understanding of these attitudes was sought in studies carried out in Hong Kong. Chinese teachers of EFL participated in a workshop that attempted to retrain teachers' attitudes for the purpose of bringing about a more communicative orientation to the teaching of English. The retraining workshop had teachers interacting face-to-face in small groups, role playing, and participating in persuasion activities. Questionnaire results about the workshop indicated that teacher behavior can be categorized as either transmissive (teacher's role is to evaluate and correct learners on established criteria) or as interpretive (teachers's role is to help learner shape his own knowledge). Further conclusions pointed out that attitudes will not change by implementing teacher training programs. One possible future remedy to strengthen the EFL curriculum would be to devise a program to accommodate the already existing attitudinal norms. (TR)

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EFL CURRICULUM INNOVATION AND TEACHERS' ATTITUDES*

Richard Young
University of Pennsylvania

Sue Lee
University of Hong Kong

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Introduction

In studies of foreign language curriculum innovation in public education systems the main emphasis has been on large scale changes brought about by educational planners to the system itself. At this macro level, curriculum innovation is typically initiated by educational authorities and carried through by institutions such as curriculum development committees, teacher training colleges, and public testing services. For the purposes of this paper, such changes brought about within an educational system itself we will call *systemic* changes. However, the documented cases of the failures of systemic changes to achieve their objectives (Mountford 1981 on Yemen; Etherton 1979, and Rodgers 1981 on Malaysia) give us cause to doubt that a purely systemic change can ever be wholly effective in bringing about better teaching and learning without a concomitant change in the behavior and attitudes of teachers. In Candlin's words:

> Innovation implies change and, understandably enough focuses the minds of the participants on action. There is a tendency for this *action* to be understood in terms of *activity* particularly oriented towards the tangible products of materials and printed work, less on the intangible process of personal development of the teachers and other participants concerned (1983:21).

Richard Young is a Ph.D. candidate in educational linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania.

Sue Lee is a lecturer in English language teaching methods at the University of Hong Kong.

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It is this process of personal development of the teachers, or more specifically the process of attitude change, that we focus on in the present paper. We hope to show that teachers' attitudes are a crucial variable in the dynamic of English as a foreign language curriculum innovation; that without effecting a change in teachers' attitudes any systemic innovation in the curriculum which purports to bring about a communicative dimension to EFL instruction will not have a significant effect on what goes on in classrooms; and lastly, that teachers' attitudes are a product of values and attitudes within a particular culture, and thus, of all the factors in curriculum innovation, they are the least susceptible to change. The paper is in four parts. In the first part we will review the theoretical basis for establishing a connection between teachers' attitudes and their classroom behavior. In the second part we will review empirical studies in support of this connection. We will then report on our own attempt at attitude change through an in-service teacher training program. Finally, we will consider two alternative explanations for our results.

Education and Teachers Attitudes

The relevance of teachers' attitudes to the nature of communication in the classroom was first pointed out in a classic study by Barnes and Schemilt (1974). These two researchers investigated the attitudes of various teachers at schools in Britain to their pupils' written work. Teachers were asked to complete an open-ended questionnaire about the reasons why they set written work for their students, and what they did with the written work after it had been handed in. Barnes and Schemilt found that replies to the questionnaire fell into two reasonably distinct categories which they labeled *Transmission* and *Interpretation*. Figure 1 shows how these attitudes differed on the four dimensions of (1) attitudes towards knowledge, (2) attitudes towards evaluating the learners' performance, (3) attitudes towards the role of the teacher, and (4) perceptions of the role of the learners.

The transmission-interpretation dichotomy has proved to be a powerful way of looking at the structure of classroom communication. Although it is stated in terms of teachers' attitudes, Barnes (1976) in a later development relates these attitudes to the behavior of teachers in classrooms. Barnes' hypothesis is that a transmission attitude is consonant with the teacher's role as a provider of information; it encourages students to contribute to classroom communication only through the presentation of a finished draft, of a well-thought-through idea; and this attitude fosters an academic kind of learning which is not directly related to the learners' purposes and needs. On the other hand, an interpretation attitude encourages a role for the teacher in which the learners' replies to the teacher's questions are treated as of value in their own right, and not simply in function of whether they correspond to the teacher's view of correctness; the students are free to explore the subject in collaboration with other students and with the teacher without the fear of the teacher's judgment of right or wrong; and lastly, the interpretation attitude fosters a kind of learning which goes beyond the bounds of normal academic knowledge, and can be related to the students' needs and interests outside school.

The relevance of the foregoing discussion of teachers' attitudes to the dynamic of EFL curriculum innovation becomes apparent when we consider the types

FIGURE 1
Differences in attitude between transmission and interpretation teachers

The transmission teacher...	The interpretation teacher...
(i) believes knowledge to exist in the form of public disciplines which include content and criteria of performance;	(i) believes knowledge to exist in the knower's ability to organize thought and action;
(ii) values the learners' performances insofar as they conform to the criteria of the discipline;	(ii) values the learners' commitment to interpreting reality, so that criteria arise as much from the learner as from the teacher;
(iii) perceives the teacher's role to be the evaluation and correction of the learners' performance, according to criteria of which the teacher is the sole guardian;	(iii) perceives the teacher's role to be the setting up of a dialog in which the learners can reshape their knowledge through interaction with others;
(iv) perceives learners as uninformed acolytes for whom access to knowledge will be difficult since they will have to qualify themselves through tests of appropriate performance.	(iv) perceives learners as already possessing systematic and relevant knowledge and the means of reshaping that knowledge

of learning which Barnes (1976) claims are fostered by the transmission and interpretation teachers. The school knowledge versus action knowledge dichotomy is reflected almost exactly in the concern of EFL curriculum innovators for a move from an EFL curriculum organized around the teaching of formal elements of the language – the grammatical patterns and vocabulary – to one in which English is used for the purposes of communication, in which students may use whatever resources they have at hand to communicate with each other and with the teacher about whatever is relevant to their individual needs and interests. The same point is made by Brumfit (1983) with regard to the distinction which he draws between accuracy and fluency activities in the EFL classroom. Classroom activities that foster lanquage use and negotiation of meaning through meaningful interaction, Brumfit calls *fluency* activities, and he contrasts these with classroom activities whose main function is to practice correct realization of the language system, which he calls *accuracy* activities. The crucial methodological distinction between accuracy and fluency activities is what Brumfit calls the *constraint on divergence*, by which he means that the language used by learners in an accuracy activity is in some way predetermined by the teacher or by the activity, while in a fluency activity there is no such predetermined constraint and learners are free to call upon whatever linguistic and nonlinguistic resources they have at their disposal in order to accomplish the task set by the activity.

It is important to realize that many techniques in the armory of the trained EFL teacher can be used in class as either accuracy activities, or as fluency activities depending on the aims of the teacher. Thus a dyadic communication game

such as "Describe and Draw" (Byrne and Rixon 1978:7-9) is normally an open-ended activity in which one student describes a picture to a second student who then attempts to draw what is being described without seeing the original picture until the end of the activity. If the teacher restricts the picture to be described to simple geometrical forms, such as squares and circles of different colors, and preteaches the language necessary to describe those forms, the "Describe and Draw" game is then an accuracy activity designed to practice the language which has been pretaught. Equally, a shift of emphasis in the opposite direction may transform what is normally an accuracy activity into a fluency one. Thus multiple choice reading comprehension questions are normally used as an accuracy activity in which the aim is to discover the correct answer. Munby (1968), however, suggests a way of using multiple choice comprehension questions in small group discussions in class in which the members of each group decide among themselves which is the best option without the intervention of the teacher. In this case, since neither the language of the discussion is predetermined, nor is there any sense in which any learner has prior knowledge of the 'correct' answer, multiple choice reading comprehension questions take on the guise of a fluency activity.

It is, thus, not in the nature of a given technique that accuracy or fluency lies, but rather in the purposes to which a teacher puts that technique. In turn, these purposes are likely to be affected by the teachers' attitude. It seems likely that transmission teachers will find that accuracy activities fit well with their view of what constitutes knowledge, and their perspective on the teaching-learning situation, and correspondingly, fluency activities are more likely to appeal to teachers with an interpretation outlook. How far this correlation translates into actual differences in classroom behavior is of course an empirical question. It may well be that training, experience, and the latest methodological trends will have an influence on teachers' behavior in the classroom, as will their tactical reactions to pedagogic problems raised by different individuals and groups of learners. However, it still seems to us a reasonable hypothesis that, other things being equal, the proportion of fluency work to accuracy work in a transmission teacher's lesson will be lower than for an interpretation teacher. The following section will report on some experimental evidence in favor of this hypothesis.

Measuring Attitudes and Behavior

The empirical studies which have been carried out within the framework of the Barnes (1976) model of attitude and classroom interaction have all used some variety of questionnaire in order to measure teachers' attitudes on a transmission-interpretation scale. Gardner and Taylor (1980) carried out a study of Australian high school students in which a questionnaire designed to elicit students' views of their teachers on a transmission-interpretation scale was used. The replies to the questionnaire were found to correlate highly with the students' views of the same teachers as directive or non-directive. D.C. Young (1981) devised a 40-item transmission-interpretation questionnaire to elicit teachers' attitudes to the teaching of English in Britain, and standardized it on a population of British teachers. A modified version of this questionnaire was used by Falvey (1983) to investigate the relationship between teachers' attitudes and their classroom behavior among native English speaking teachers of EFL in Hong Kong.

Falvey's (1983) questionnaire consisted of 40 statements about some aspect

of teaching or learning English as a foreign language, 11 of which were positive items (e.g. "Students should frequently be given the opportunity to participate in activities which involve spoken interaction without having to pay too much attention to the grammatical accuracy of their utterances"), and 19 of which were reversed (e.g. "Direct instruction in the rules and terminology of grammar is essential if students are to learn to communicate correctly and effectively"), the remaining 10 items being fillers, replies to which were not counted in the final scoring of the questionnaire. Falvey administered the questionnaire to 35 native-speaking teachers of EFL in Hong Kong, and after scoring their replies, identified two teachers who represented extreme transmission and extreme interpretation views. Both teachers then taught a one hour EFL lesson to their normal class of intermediate Hong Kong Chinese students, and the classes were videotaped. Neither of the teachers was aware of the purpose of the videotaping. The two lessons were then transcribed and analyzed according to the model of classroom discourse proposed by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), as adapted for the EFL classroom by Willis (1981). Tables 1-3 are our own representations and calculations based on Falvey's data.

TABLE 1
Proportions of one hour lesson spent in various types of interaction by an interpretation teacher and a transmission teacher

	Interaction type				
	Teacher & whole class	Teacher & one student	Student & student	Silence	Total
Interpretation teacher	3'29" (6%)	14'31" (24%)	42' (69%)	1'11" (2%)	61'11" (100%)
Transmission teacher	2'45" (5%)	36'15" (60%)	13'13" (22%)	7'47" (13%)	60' (100%)

(χ_3 = 29.94; 3df; $p < 0.001$)

TABLE 2
Proportions of teacher- and student-initiated teaching exchanges in the two lessons

	Teaching exchanges		
	Teacher-initiated	Student-initiated	Total
Interpretation teacher	91 (85%)	13 (15%)	104 (100%)
Transmission teacher	187 (96%)	7 (4%)	194 (100%)

(χ = 7.19; 1 df; $p < 0.01$)

TABLE 3
Proportions of different kinds of teacher-initiated free exchanges in the two lessons

	Teacher-initiated free exchanges									
	Inform		Elicit-open		Elicit-check		Direct		Total	
Interpretation teacher	5	(7%)	41	(59%)	1	(1%	22	(32%)	69	(100%)
Transmission teacher	8	(6%)	19	(15%)	22	(17%)	77	(61%)	126	(100%)

(χ = 45.74; 3 df; $p < 0.001$)

These tables show clearly that the different attitudes of the two teachers as measured on the transmission-interpretation questionnaire translate into significant differences in teaching style. This is especially noteworthy, since the two teachers were matched on a number of other variables such as age, sex, and teaching experience, and the two lessons were basically comparable oral activity lessons to similar groups of learners from the same L1 background, and with the same level of proficiency in English. Table 1 shows that there was a highly significant difference between the proportions of different types of interaction which occurred in the two lessons. Fully 69% of the interpretation teacher's lesson was spent in student-student interaction, in comparison to only 22% for the transmission teacher. Conversely, 60% of the transmission teacher's lesson was spent in interaction between herself and one student at a time, whereas the comparable figure for the interpretation teacher was only 24%. Table 2 shows that there was a small but significant difference between the number of exchanges which were initiated by the teacher and by students for the two teachers. As might be expected, the number of teacher-initiations was overwhelming in both cases, but there were slightly more student initiations in the interpretation teacher's lesson. Lastly, in Table 3, the nature of the teacher-initiations is compared for both teachers. Again, the interpretation teacher asks far more questions which elicit new information (elicit-open exchanges) than display questions to which she already knows the answer (elicit-check exchanges) in the proportion of 41:1: whereas the proportion of open to check exchanges for the transmission teacher is approximately equal at 19:22. The transmission teacher moreover gives far more directions to her class than the interpretation teacher (61% in comparison to 32%).

Falvey's (1983) study thus lends strong support to the relationship between teachers' attitudes and their classroom behavior which Barnes (1976) had outlined in theory. The implication for an innovation in the EFL curriculum which attempts to encourage more fluency activities in the classroom, and to discourage an overemphasis on accuracy work is clear: such an innovation is not likely to succeed through teacher retraining programs unless such programs are able to bring about a corresponding shift in teachers' attitudes toward the nature of language learning and toward their own role in that process.

Teacher Retraining and Attitude Change

Attitudes and techniques of attitude change are fairly well researched topics within the field of social psychology. Three main techniques have been put forward by researchers. Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey (1962) report that new attitudes are more likely to be transferred through face-to-face communication than through impersonal lectures or mass media communications. Lott and Lott (1960) found that if a certain attitude is held by a particular social group with which an individual wishes to identify, then that attitude will be relatively easier to acquire than would be the case if the attitude were not associated with the target group. Janis and King (1954) found that simple exposure to persuasive communication was not as effective in bringing about attitude change as active participation by the subject in some behavior associated with the new attitude. Thus role play was found to be an effective way of bringing about the reordering of beliefs and needs that is associated with attitude change. These three principles were incorporated in the design of an in-service retraining program for Chinese teachers of English as a foreign language in Hong Kong.

The retraining program was part of a systemic program of curriculum innovation in EFL initiated by the Hong Kong government, involving the redesign of the English syllabus for elementary and high schools, production of new communicatively-based teaching materials, and revision of the public evaluation and testing procedures to reflect the more communicative aims of the new syllabus, as well as a large retraining program for all elementary and high school teachers of English. The stated aim of the retraining program was to effect a change in the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of participants toward a more communicative orientation to the teaching of English in order to enable them to function effectively after the implementation of the new syllabus. The 90-hour program was modular in design, enabling participants to choose which modular topics to attend in any given week of seven and one-half contact hours. Each module was designed and taught by experienced native-speaking instructors in a way in which it was hoped would allow for maximum effect on participants' attitudes. The style of instruction was highly participant-centered with the participants sitting in small groups actively engaged in problem-solving activities and practical tasks, and with the instructor acting as counsellor and animator to the individual groups. It was through this close personal contact between instructor and participants that it was hoped that new attitudes would be more readily learned as suggested by Krech et al. (1982). In addition to this, the style of instruction adopted also fostered a sense of belonging to a like-minded group of peers, as suggested by Lott and Lott (1960). The program also involved a large amount of experimentation with new fluency techniques for EFL teaching and relatively little explanation of the theoretical framework underlying them. It was hoped in this way to develop the active participation which Janis and King (1954) had mentioned as such an important factor in attitude change.

Since, of the three aims of the retraining program, attitude change was regarded as the most important, an attempt was made to measure what effect if any, the 90-hour program had on participants' attitudes. To this end, Falvey's (1983) adaptation of D.C.Young's (1981) transmission-interpretation questionnaire was administered to participants on the first and last days of the program. The questionnaire was translated into Chinese, and the Chinese version of each item

appeared immediately below the original English. The questionnaire was administered by personnel other than those involved in the retraining program, and was administered under similar conditions before and after the treatment program. The results of this exercise are shown in Table 4, and are compared with questionnaire results from other groups in Tables 5 and 6.

TABLE 4

Numbers of replies, mean, and standard deviation of scores on a transmission-interpretation attitude questionnaire administered before and after a 90-hour teacher retraining program. (High scores indicate interpretation attitudes, low scores indicate transmission.)

	N	X	S.D.
Before treatment	136	117	14
After treatment	94	122	21

(Difference of means = +5; t = 1.852; 228 df; $p > 0.05$; not significant)

TABLE 5

Replies to the questionnaire from three different groups of Hong Kong Chinese teachers of English at the start of retraining programs

	N	X	S.D.
Group 1 (Chinese elementary school teachers)	136	117	14
Group 2 (Chinese high school teachers)	273	119	23
Group 3 (Chinese elementary school teachers)	123	116	15
Combined groups 1-3	532	117	17

TABLE 6

A comparison of replies to the attitude questionnaire from Hong Kong Chinese teachers, and British, American and Australian teachers

	N	X	S.D.
Chinese teachers	532	117	17
Native-speaking teachers (Falvey 1983)	35	148	16

As Table 4 shows, teachers who participated in the inservice retraining course showed a slight movement in the direction of an interpretation attitude by the end of the course, but the change was so small as to be statistically insignificant. This result should be interpreted with caution since only 94 of the original 136 teachers took the questionnaire on completion of the program. A number of explanations can be put forward for this disappointing result. First, as is stressed repeatedly in the social psychological literature on attitude change, attitudes are remarkably resistant to attempts to change them. Second, the instrument used to measure attitude may well have been an insensitive measure of attitude change.

The theoretical limits of the scale derived from the questionnaire were a lower limit of 30, and an upper limit of 210, giving a total range of 180 points, and it was on this theoretically maxiumum range that the T-test of significance was conducted, although the actual range of respondents' scores was only from 88 to 168, i.e. a range of 80 points. On this basis a change of +5 points appears more significant, albeit still small.

Table 5 shows an interesting comparison between the scores of the group of teachers in Table 4 with a group of 273 high school teachers, and another group of 123 elementary school teachers measured when all three groups were about to begin separate retraining programs. It shows a remarkable degree of consistency in the mean scores for the three groups, only 3 points separating the highest from the lowest. There was no appreciable difference between the attitudes of teachers in high schools from those of their colleagues in elementary schools. Lastly, Table 6 shows the most interesting comparison of all, between the mean scores on the questionnaire obtained by all three groups of Hong Kong Chinese teachers of EFL, and Falvey's (1983) group of native-speaking (British, American, and Australian) teachers of EFL in Hong Kong. This result shows that the native-speaking teachers score consistently more towards the interpretation end of the scale than do the Chinese teachers, who are consistently more transmission oriented in their attitudes. This result is underlined by D.C. Young's (1981) original calibration of the questionnaire on native-speaking teachers of English in Britain. He found that for British teachers, a score of 133 represented a lower cut-off point, scores below which indicated an extreme transmission attitude, and a score of 174 represented an upper cut-off point, scores above which indicated an extreme interpretation attitude. For the Chinese teachers, however, these extremes make little sense, since the vast majority of scores cluster below the 133 mark, and not one Chinese teacher out of more 400 who took the questionnaire scored above Young's upper cut-off point.

Discussion: Two Models of Curriculum Innovation

From our results and those reported by Falvey (1983), it seems that we can draw a number of conclusions regarding EFL curriculum innovation in non-English-speaking countries through teacher retraining courses. First, there is a strong indication that transmission or interpretation attitudes on the part of EFL teachers are related to their classroom behavior. Teachers with an interpretation attitude allow more time for student-student interaction in their lessons, and ask more questions requiring genuinely informative responses than do teachers with a transmission oriented attitude. Second, although teachers from a similar cultural background exhibit a range of attitudes on a transmission-interpretation scale, populations of teachers from different cultural backgrounds are characterized by very different attitudinal norms. In the present study we have shown that the attitudes of Hong Kong Chinese teachers vary around a norm which is far more oriented transmission than the norm for teachers coming from a Western/Anglo cultural background. Thirdly, this attitudinal norm, being a product of stable values within a particular society, is resistant to change by means of treatments such as teacher retraining programs of the kind described above. The prospects for the success of a systemic curriculum innovation which attempts to replace an accuracy-based teaching method with a fluency-based one are thus not very encouraging.

Rather than conclude on this pessimistic note, however, we would prefer to consider two possible remedies for this state of affairs. One possibility is that the teacher retraining program needs to make a far more radical attempt at attitude change. The other possibility is that curriculum innovators should recognize the stability of teachers' attitudinal norms within a given society, and consequently devise an efficient curriculum around those norms, rather than attempting to change them. We will consider these two alternatives in greater detail below.

1. *More efficient techniques for attitude change.*

In considering how to design a more efficient treatment for attitude change, we shall follow the framework established by Sharan, Darom and Hertz-Lazarowitz (1979) in their work in introducing small group teaching in schools in Israel. The Israeli study identifies three domains in which attitude change may be brought about by retraining courses: experiential, environmental, and cognitive. The experiential domain was identified since clearly attitudes are influenced by one's experience and by one's evaluation of that experience. In the Israeli study it was found that teachers who had more experience of the particular curriculum innovation in question—small group teaching—expressed more positive attitudes towards it than teachers who had had less experience, provided that the initial experience had been a favorable one. Since the experience of successfully using the new techniques in the actual situation in which they are designed to be applied is important to attitude change, there is a clear implication that retraining courses should be based around participants' experiences teaching real students in actual classrooms, and not simply by a simulation of that situation in the controlled environment of the teacher-training institution.

Second, as was identified by Lott and Lott (1960), the attitude of one's peer group and high prestige personalities exert a strong influence on the learning of new attitudes. This is confirmed by the Israeli study in which it was found that the attitudes of the teachers' colleagues and superiors to the new teaching methods were a very important factor in helping or hindering the acquisition of a positive attitude towards the new methods. Here again is an implication for the design of retraining programs: these programs should be organized much more around individual schools in which the whole staff and the school management is involved in the course, rather than being run, as is generally the case, at teacher training institutions where only one or two teachers from any one school attend at a time. Recent British experience with school-based or school-focused retraining courses (Henderson 1979) seems to confirm the greater efficacy of this approach.

The third area identified in the Israeli study is the cognitive domain. One's information about a new way of teaching and one's understanding of the principles underlying it are an important source of attitude formation and change. In fact, the Israeli study found that the teachers' understanding of the principles underlying small group teaching was the most prominent predictor of the attitude of teachers toward the new techniques, indicating that those teachers who are better able to identify the principles underlying a new approach are also more likely to feel that it is a more effective way of teaching. Thus, a model of curriculum innovation by means of retraining courses organized entirely around heuristic training techniques without a cognitive dimension of formal presentation and discussion of the principles involved may not be the most effective way of bringing about a change in attitude and behavior.

2. *Culturally appropriate curricula*

The alternative approach is to recognize the stability of teachers' attitudes and to redesign the curriculum taking these attitudes as a given, rather than attempting to change them. The model of classroom interaction proposed by Barnes (1976), and the Brumfit (1983) accuracy-fluency distinction, when viewed from a cross-cultural perspective, may be no more than descriptions of culturally appropriate patterns of classroom interaction within the particular Western/Anglo culture which spawned them. Research into the ethnography of speaking (Hymes 1962, Gumperz and Hymes 1964, Philips 1972) has shown that patterns of interaction in one particular culture are not necessarily transferable to another culture, and if an attempt is made to do this in schools, the educational consequences may be disastrous. Recently, curriculum innovations based upon a recognition of culturally appropriate interactional patterns have had considerable success among Hawaiian children in the Kamehameha Early Education Program (Au and Jordan 1981, Jordan, Au and Joesting 1983), and a start has been made on comparing ethnic Chinese classrooms with mainstream American ones (Sato 1982, Wong Fillmore 1982, van Naerssen, Huang and Yarnall 1983, Guthrie 1984). However, much more ethnographic work is needed on Chinese classrooms in Hong Kong and in other ethnic Chinese communities in Asia and around the world before any practical recommendations can be made for culturally appropriate innovations in the EFL curricula in these communities. Nevertheless, given the apparent stability of Chinese teachers' attitudes, and the radically different attitudinal norms of Chinese and Anglo teachers, the approach of designing a culturally appropriate curriculum may be in the long run more effective in promoting better EFL teaching and learning than attempts at attitude change.

In this respect we are reminded of the remark by an official from the Chinese Ministry of Education in Peking who, on a visit to Hong Kong, found himself in the middle of a debate over the relative merits of the structural and communicative approaches to teaching English as a foreign language. "What we need," said the official, "is not the structural approach, nor the communicative approach. We need the Chinese approach."

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